

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application as amended. Claims 21-40 remain in the application. Claims 21, 23, 25-26, 28, 30-31, 33, 35-36, 38 and 40 have been amended to more properly define preexisting claim limitations and are supported by the specification.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 21-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,639,582 of Shrader ("Shrader").

Applicants do not admit that Shrader is prior art and reserves the right to swear behind the reference at a later date. Nonetheless, Applicants respectfully submit that Shrader does not disclose each and every element as claimed.

Shrader discloses a touchboard or touchpad of a matrix of rods 19 which are movable within a substrate or board 21 by touch via a finger 27 or hand 29 as shown in FIGS. 3 through 5. The finger or hand is used to physically input the haptic forces while the haptic forces or effects transmitted or feedback from the other haptic terminals are applied via the computer controlling the respective touchboard through an individual small motor associated with each rod in the touchboard matrix. (See Shrader, column 4, lines 15-23).

Shrader does not disclose the elements of or the element similar to a stimulus associated with a temperature at a first haptel being reproduced on a second haptel, as recited in claim 21. The touchboard and touchpad, as disclosed in Shrader, do not disclose that a temperature may be reproduced as claimed. The reproduction of temperature, as claimed, aids in conveying a sense of closeness when communicating over, for example, a relative long distance when using the haptels.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Shrader does not disclose each and every element as recited in claim 21. Independent claims 26, 31, and 36 include the element or the elements similar to those discussed above for claim 1; and hence are patentable over Shrader for the reasons stated above. Claims 22-25, 27-30, 32-35 and 37-40 are dependent on one of claims 21, 26, 31, and 36; and are patentable at least for the reasons stated above. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the rejections to claims 21-40 under 35 USC §102(e) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION


Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections have been overcome by the amendments and remarks, and that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejections be withdrawn and the pending claims be allowed.

If there are any additional charges, please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any fee deficiency that may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

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